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ABSTRACT

Although progress has been made in the past decade in dealing with social and economic problems, there are still problems that need to be addressed. These include the need to revitalize decayed urban areas, and to develop human resources in these areas. This paper suggests that a comprehensive community education approach may be part of the answer, promoting citizen involvement and local leadership at the community level. It is suggested that community education be extended to nontraditional community based educational organizations and agencies and that a diligent effort should be made to establish firm linkages affecting processes and programs. The present provisions for community education are also seen as weak. A major point of this paper is that community education should promote citizen participation and local leadership, and should be carefully and purposely planned in terms of short and long term objectives. (Author/AM)

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION SHOULD BE VIEWED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -- ENHANCING EDUCATION FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

By

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Comprehensive Community Education Should Be Viewed Within The Context Of Community Development -- Enhancing Education For The World Of Work

Introduction

One of the most pressing current challenges in education, is to provide vehicles to keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in science and technology. The demands of our times suggest that we continue to draw upon all the human resources available in our society, and to marshal these resources in order to promote the development of our citizenry to the fullest possible extent. We have made reasonably good progress during the past decade or thereabout, in dealing with a variety of social and economic problems affecting millions of Americans. However, at this point in time there is still the need to address some urgent and pressing ones. Those that immediately come to mind are:

1. The need to revitalize urban blight and decay and to develop human resources in these areas--which are largely inhabited by the poor, the uneducated, and the undereducated, and a substantial number of unemployed and underemployed. Essentially this means providing adequate housing on the one hand and on the other providing basic occupational training programs in order to insure employability for many adults.

2. The need to educate the general citizenry on the structure and functions of local, state, and federal governments.

3. A third factor of no less importance is the national concern over the low level of reading ability of youngsters graduating from high school and entering college. If as someone once remarked "the future of a country lies in the education of its youth", communities across the nation need to get busy and explore every avenue to work with the public schools in order to try and improve the situation. This task is a tremendous educational process for both educators and lay people--parents, guardians, citizen groups, religious leaders, etc.

4. The need for the most powerful nation to re-examine, redefine, and articulate its role in the international marketplace and provide multi-dimensional leadership to many developing countries while avoiding colonial domination.

On the basis of the concerns raised above, the need becomes immediately apparent to examine current available community educational activities which are at least partially geared to deal with

these concerns. While there are various kinds of programs currently available, and while the task of putting together a comprehensive program is by no means a simple exercise, the demands mandate the search for solutions.

It is the intent of this discussion to suggest that a comprehensive Community Education approach may very well be the partial answer not only in terms of its components, but also in terms of the need to resuscitate citizen involvement and local leadership at the community level. Additionally, it is conceived that a dynamic partnership between non-traditional community-based organizations and traditional institutions is a vital ingredient for the development tasks. The focus is on large urban centers.

We need additional and more realistic dimensions to citizen participation and local leadership. We need a new infusion of vigor and vitality to develop the central cities of America which are largely inhabited by the poor, the undereducated, the uneducated, the unemployed. We need a comprehensive program funded and supported by the federal and state governments. We need a whole new stratagem for action--with lay people (the poor) and bureaucrats working together--using the lessons of the past (especially those of the 1960's) to build a future America. The job is ripe for action and the central

purpose should be untainted -- free from the trappings of tokenism, power guardianship, skin color classification, political greed, myths and fallacies. I suggest we could very well begin with a comprehensive Community Education package, reflecting a new definition and philosophy of Community Education.

I agree with Minzey and LeTarte (1) that, "The ultimate goal of Community Education is to develop a process by which members of a community learn to work together to identify problems and seek solutions", but I do not find myself in total agreement with them that "the most important aspect of Community Education is not program but process". I think both could very well command equal emphasis, although in the initial stages the process may take precedence over program. In any case the ultimate concern should be the implementation of programs to improve the life of the community. Conceivably process is likely to become almost meaningless in the absence of meaningful programs dealing with priority needs.

At this juncture it is considered expedient to make the following observations:

1. None of the terms used in this discussion are new. In fact they are well known to most lay people, let alone

those in higher education and government agencies. Moreover, the problems relating to meaningful citizen participation and leadership from within lay groups have been extensively researched and rehearsed. Sherry Arnstein (2), for example, suggested the roadblocks on both sides, to meaningful citizen participation in policy making decisions. On the power-holders side she cited racism, paternalism, and resistance to power distribution. On the side of the have-nots, she cited inadequacies in political clout, socioeconomic limitations as well as organizational problems. Many others have expressed similar observations.

2. Additionally, wherever the term development is used it should be associated with human development, placing emphasis on process and programs.
3. There is ample awareness that circumstances outside the community have significant influence within the community; consequently there is need for what Lee Cary (3) refers to as "reciprocal interrelationship" between local community concerns and those of a designated region or the nation as a whole.

4. Essentially it is intended to call attention to what is potentially possible in a comprehensive Community Education package. It is assumed that meaningful citizen participation and strong local leadership are indispensable to any overall community developmental effort, designed to have a real and permanent impact on the life of the community.

Community Education Defined

Most general definitions of Community Education suggest that it is an awareness that better communities result from a combination of various community elements, to provide for the delivery service, that involves coordination and sharing of resources, citizen participation, continuous learning and organizational partnership, especially between the school and the community.

LeTarte and Minzey (4) suggested that the school is most effective when it involves the people it serves in program design, but seem to stop short of viewing Community Education outside the schoolroom by indicating, that in their view, the very essence of Community Education revolves around the traditional schoolhouse.

There is nothing basically wrong with their suggestions, however, for the most part they tend to view Community Education

only within the confines and/or domain of the traditional schoolroom.

I suggest that Community Education should extend to non-traditional community-based educational organizations and agencies and that a diligent effort should be made to establish solid linkages, affecting process and programs. I further suggest that Community Education should be viewed within the context of community development and that priority attention should be given to those areas of the community that must be developed--physical development and human resources development.

Meaningful Community Education viewed within the context of community development, should, include education for youth as well as adults, a variety of occupational and job training programs and certainly conducted outside the confines of classrooms. This is based on the proposition that education is essentially what people become, not what they get and that is not confined to youths and young adults. Indeed, one of the current challenges in education is to provide viable adult and continuing education programs in order to upgrade and retrain adults, with a view to enhancing employability, economic viability, social and civic responsibilities. Any definition of Community Education must perforce, in my judgment, include education for the total community--both youngsters and adults, and

not the least for adults, in multi-dimensional ways.

The present Community Education Act (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Community School Act, Title IV, Section 405, as amended, Public Law 3-380) defines a community education program "as a program in which a public building, including but not limited to a public elementary or secondary school or a community or junior college, is used as a community center..." General provisions of the Act provide for educational, recreational, cultural, and other related community services as determined by the community. It calls for the involvement of elementary and secondary schools, and their uses as community centers, utilization of community resources through interagency cooperation, special services to pre-school youths, truancy problems and programs for senior citizens.

While the programs are both useful and necessary, the main concern of this discussion is that several others could be added. The language stipulated that grants will be made only to state educational agencies and local educational agencies, but no application shall be approved by the Commissioner unless it is reviewed by the appropriate state educational agency. There is also provision for institutions of higher education to seek funds to provide in-service

assessment, to local and state agencies.

The fact that public schools can be used as community centers is not a substitute for citizen participation. Meaningful citizen participation is likely to be a far cry from reality unless there is specific language in the legislation which ties this to funding. The problem could be further complicated when state agencies, far removed from the problems are given the authority to review and recommend programs to the Commissioner. In spite of genuine desires on the part of many state officials, it is not idle to note that this is the traditional practice, which inadvertantly, has bypassed some real community problems over the years.

Moreover, the provision that is obviously lacking is the exclusion of non-traditional community-based educational, civic, religious, and other service organizations. Inclusion of these, coupled with the possibilities for a wide range of programs, could conceivably forge a real working partnership between these organizations and established educational institutions. Such a partnership could provide for:

1. Joint approach in developing prioritized and program solving objectives and planning for professional development and program evaluation.

2. Reduction of varying degrees of opposition to community-based organizations by traditionally established institutions.

3. Enhancement of public support for non-traditional community-based organizations, as well as insuring wider acceptability and understanding of their roles.

4. Provide opportunities for those in higher education to develop greater understanding and appreciation of grassroots community problems affecting the poor and undereducated vis-a-vis recognition of the need for assistance from those in higher education by lay citizens.

Established local educational institutions could embark on new areas of curriculum development, research, evaluation techniques, and teaching methods, through joint planning with those community agencies that are recognized as representing the concerns of the majority community or the needs of a particular clientele group.

It is on this basis that I view the present provisions for Community Education, as weak and almost meaningless -- in the light of conditions affecting the poor, the uneducated and undereducated.

The preceding point of view calls for a totally new definition of Community Education and a drastic departure from the present concept. Granted, that this suggested approach is rejected outright, the need to address the following concerns seems inescapable:

1. The need to educate parents and citizens to the problems affecting public schools and to seek their assistance in find solutions; especially in disciplinary matters and the problem of truancy.
2. The need to involve citizens in decision making relative to at least some areas of curriculum development.
3. The need to provide a comprehensive basic occupational training program for many adults in order for them to ensure productivity, job stability and upward mobility.
4. The need to provide viable program linkages between established institutions and non-traditional community-based educational organizations and other community agencies. Programs like Upward Bound and Talent Search, and Day Care could conceivably be more successful if community organizations, citizen groups, parents and/or guardians were involved.
5. The need for programs to deal with the problems of

youth unemployment and its attendant social consequences cannot be overemphasized.

In spite of several pieces of legislation during the past decade, and expenditures of large sums of money, we are now confronted with increasing illiteracy rates, increased youth delinquency, and youth unemployment continues to rise. A comprehensive Community Education package certainly is one means of seeking to effect improvement. It is on the basis of this concern that the significance of citizen participation and leadership are suggested as primary ingredients for the task.

James J. Shields examined Community Education in a number of countries supported by AID funds and remarked that:

> Community development will not become an effective instrument until all the fields whose concerns touch on community development are recognized and utilized in planning, programming, and evaluation. Whenever community development becomes the exclusive domain of any one discipline of subject area, whether it is sociology, social work, or anthropology, it is doomed to one-sidedness and a severely limited range of success. (5)

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Shields that community development is an educational process far beyond the boundaries of any particular discipline--that it involves transfer of skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Needless to reiterate in this particular instance, a comprehensive approach is viewed as only one of many segments in any overall community development effort. Suffice it to add that in many instances it is most useful as a companion program, operating simultaneously with other development efforts.

Education For The World Of Work

The Founding Fathers of America, in spite of their divergent backgrounds seem to have agreed on two basic beliefs, namely the dignity of the individual, and the freedom of each individual to earn a livelihood in that individual's area of choice. Education for the world of work was a conscious effort in the formative period of this country. It is reasonable to suggest that our society was build on the work ethic principle.

There are millions of adult Americans who are not habitual workers because they are not equipped to obtain or hold a steady job. The two basic factors which have often been cited as contributing to their plight, are inadequate educational preparation, and lack of motivation. For these the attendant consequences are social

and economic depression. Other disturbing effects are family dislocation, inability to undertake social and civic responsibilities, psychological depression, crime and delinquency. Added to these is the spiralling increased burden on the average working taxpayer, in order to support these individuals either on welfare or in penal institutions.

On August 20, 1966, J. Kenneth Little (6) delivered a speech to the day school staff at the Madison Area Technical College. His theme was, "Does Education For Work, Work?" Little elaborated on his theme by observing that one of the problems confronting education was the need for changing the quality of educational experience, greater involvement of students in shaping their learning experiences and extending the range and types of learning activities, both in and outside the classroom, redefining the role and qualifications of teachers, and placing new values upon preparation for work as a primary outcome of the educational process for all students at all levels of the educational system. Within the context of this discussion, Little's observation offers the challenge for exploring new dimensions to Community Education - hopefully to promote additional vehicles for human resource development.

A New Philosophy Is Needed

"A philosophy of education is any reasonable coherent set of values and fundamental assumptions used as a basis for evaluating and guiding educational practices." So said Philip H. Phenix (7). For purposes of this discussion, this viewpoint seems acceptable.

In discussing the vocational aspects of education, Dewey (8) noted that occupation is a concrete term for continuity, that it includes the development of artistic capacity of any kind, of special scientific ability, of effective citizenship, as well as professional and business occupation, to say nothing of mechanical labor or engagement in gainful persuits. This observation augers well for the promotion of basic occupational skills for the type of clientele who also needs basic academic upgrading. It has both short and long term implications for economic viability and citizenship responsibility. Advocacy for a new philosophy for those adults and youths who are functionally illiterate, rest in part on acceptance of the philosophy of 'Reconstructionism' which suggest that man is a goal-seeking animal and that these goals can be delineated with the aid of the human sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

In the United States, there is constant agitation for jobs

and job-training programs for the poor, especially blacks and other minority groups residing in the central cities. Are these demands unreasonable when wealth and affluence "on the other side of the fence" serve as daily reminders of poverty and misery? Is the cause of poverty laziness or inability to produce due to lack of basic training? Should able-bodied men and women be supported by welfare or should they be trained for gainful employment? Who is really the big, lazy "Buck"? Are current program approaches sufficiently adequate to promote employment and motivation for adults; many with family responsibilities? The quest for the good life is deeply entangled with motivation, a high degree of self-confidence, based primarily on a combination of either purely academic achievements or a combination of academic and vocational. They provide the catalyst for man's further adventure into the field of knowledge.

The argument for more meaningful education and training programs is reflected in the following philosophical statement:

1. In a democratic society every citizen should be provided the opportunity to develop his/her potential to the fullest extent possible.
2. Human beings are educable persons and human growth

and development is a distinct possibility when the opportunity is available.

3. The preservation of society is dependent on the extent to which adults are prepared to understand all of its ramifications and to be able to make provisions for continued growth and improvement.

4. Poverty and illiteracy are the two essentials for both social and human stagnation and decay. The escape route from this area of human stagnation, is literacy, and training for the world of work - in order that man, as an individual, may "find himself" and be able to "lose himself" into interest and ideas larger and more enduring.

5. For adults and aspiring youths, learning exercises are more likely to become meaningful to the extent that those exercises relate to priority needs such as achievement, recognition, and self-fulfillment.

Suggested Approachs And Program Content

The following suggestions are viewed as elements of the type of approach suggested for a broader and more comprehensive approach to Community Education:

I. 'Comprehensive' Community-Based Adult Training Centers

Community based training centers - these should be established in close proximity to major population centers in the central cities. They should be closely linked with the nearest technical or community college. They should be visable and recognized, designed as permanent educational training centers.

a. Program content - every effort should be made to include a variety of occupational-vocational training programs. These should be conducted conjointly with academic remedial programs and physical isolation between one component and the other should be minimized to the fullest extent possible.

b. Job development, job counseling, and job placement - job development in this sense means close working relationship with business and industry in order to: a) determine job availability, b) exploring the possibilities of "creating" positions. Job counseling means providing the clientele with pertinent information relative to various kinds of

jobs - in particular firms or companies. Job placement means assistance in finding a job with a particular firm and coordination with personnel in said firms in order to provide needed assistance, encourage additional training if necessary and encourage promotion.

c. Day care centers -- efforts should be made to establish day care centers as adjuncts to a training center or in close proximity to a training center. This has the potential of a) reducing cost, b) providing mothers with the opportunity to assist in the care of their own children, c) providing those in charge to get firsthand assistance from mothers.

d. Programs should be established with clearly defined goals and objectives. Objectives (long and short term) should be prioritized taking into consideration quantity, quality, time, and cost. The development of goals and objectives should provide and opportunity for clientele in participation in curriculum development, and other important elements of the program.

These suggestions called for two imperatives namely: a) the need for substantial additional federal allocation, b) the need for a revision in the states approach to program sponsoring. Revision at the federal level should call for new goals and objectives in addition to dollar allocation. Revision at the state level should largely reflect programmatic approach and the type of personnel involved in decision making.

II. Urban Job Corps Centers

The Job Corps which was established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, is still operative under Title IV of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973. The program is designed to assist youths between the ages of 16 and 21 to gain the necessary education and skills in order to obtain employment.

The Job Corps differs from other employment and training programs mainly because of its use of residential centers, mostly located in rural areas. Transfer of youths from urban to rural areas or from one end of the country to another caused several problems and led to the termination of some programs in the past.

Job Corps Centers were established to provide intensive programs of education, vocational training, and work experience. Provisions were also made to assist students with limited English speaking ability. The program has also attempted to respond to new demands created by social changes. One of which was the establishment of coeducational centers which provide for a wider range of training opportunities to both men and women.

There is a growing awareness that Job Corps Centers need not be located in sparsely populated, isolated areas where youths are far removed from their relatives and in many instances find it difficult to make the adjustment needed to make full use of courses of the program. It is on this basis that urban or semi-urban Job Corps Centers are viewed as a more appropriate approach for helping to solve the problems of youths in the central cities of America.

There are strong arguments for and against urban Job Corps Centers but the need to provide additional education and skilled training for youths between the

ages of 16 and 21 far outweigh the objections that have been raised. Moreover a carefully planned program may very well provide the opportunity for citizen participation and local leadership.

Other areas which need attention and could be incorporated into a Community Education package are:

1. Senior Citizens Projects - Nursing Homes, etc.
2. Recreational Activities
3. Athletic Programs
4. Health Maintenance
5. Consumer Education
6. Urban Correctional Centers or Halfway Houses for youths and first offenders of misdemeanors

Community Education Should Promote Citizen Participation

At the National Seminar on Adult Education at Elliot Lake, Ontario in September 1968, Walter Gerschenfeld made the following observation:

> As a final generalization, I think this one is all important. The people being served must participate in the establishment of the programs being set up for them. You can't do it otherwise -- we

play games with ourselves if we do -- we pretend. (9)

If Gerschenfelds position seems extreme, what he was attempting to point out is, by and large, commonly accepted by adult educators who have had personal field experience in trying to organize adult basic education programs. Adults reject any program that they consider being "forced upon them", notwithstanding the fact that for economic and socioeconomic reasons the program may be very indispensable to their own advancement. The fact that they have not been involved in any way in the decision making process has the potential of destroying what may be conceived by some as an appropriate and a necessary activity for them. In principle the same observation holds true for a number of other community development activities.

Citizen participation activities, have within recent years received partial endorsement as one of the major elements in any community development process. Sociologists and social planners who have become advocates of social change have argued that community-based agencies are in a relatively good position to offer and provide citizens experience in organizational management, decision making and leadership roles. However, they have also expressed concern that all too often, the problem citizens face,

is the tendency on the part of elected and appointed officials to thwart the involvement of citizens of low socioeconomic and educational status in policy making. The reason frequently given is that they lack the necessary skills and sophistication to make technical decisions.

On the surface this would appear justifiable. However, many are oblivious to the fact that as adults, many of these people have already accepted family, economic, and civil responsibilities. Moreover, they must have at their disposal grassroots information on particular situations that is not available from any other sources. Indeed, the complaint most often voiced is that the "average layman" is not being given adequate opportunity to participate in decisions immediately affecting the community and the lives of its citizens.

Behavioral scientists have conducted various investigations to determine the extent of meaningful citizen participation in federally funded programs. Almost invariably, they have cited two basic concerns expressed by local community leaders. First, they claim that local politicians often, in subtle ways try to abort any real attempt at citizen participation, and they were often short-changed because of lack of sufficient political clout. Secondly, there is opposition in varying degrees from traditionally established

educational institutions, reportedly because of lack of confidence in non-traditional educational agencies as well as the feeling that any meaningful community effort would undermine their institutional base.

Melvin Moglof (10) examined citizen participation in the Juvenile Delinquency Demonstration Program and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) Community Action Program. He concluded that citizen participation was at best weak, and in 1969 shared the skepticism expressed by Saul Alinsky regarding meaningful citizen participation in the pending Model Cities Program. Edelston and Kolodner (11) also claimed that "maximum feasible citizen participation" was not achieved in OEO programs. They seem inclined to place the major portion of the blame on the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington.

In a paper entitled "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", Sherry R. Arnstein (12) observed that the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach -- that no one is against it. She, however, hastened to add that when this principle is advocated by those she referred to as "have-nots", Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Mexican-Americans, Eskimos, and Poor Whites, the applause is reduced to polite handclaps.

Arnstein elaborated on her remarks by suggesting a typology of citizen participation with eight steps beginning with manipulation and nonparticipation of citizens, and climaxing with citizen control and high degrees of citizen participation. While advocating strong citizen partnership in community development activities, she is careful to point out that total citizen control is likely to be accompanied by such negative factors as the promotion of separatism, excessive cost, and the creation of inadequate financial resources.

Richard Cole's study, "Citizen Participation and the Urban Policy Process", (13) is a very useful document on citizen participation. Although its focus is on citizen participation in municipal politics, his references to Federal Programs such as the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and Model Cities should be noted. The reason is obvious. Federal legislations have been the main catalyst for the promotion of inclusive open-ended citizen participation, where all segments of the community are represented, and options available for other groups to participate after initial action. The cautious note of optimism referred to earlier and the context in which this discussion is raised, is that a federally funded Community Education package could enhance citizen participation and leadership in a most meaningful way, especially if past experiences

are used to avoid certain roadblocks in the future.

In discussing the need for communities to continue to promote learning activities, John B. Holden observed that: "In a world full of controversy over Black power, student power, and age power, it is obvious that the future of our society depends on brain power and citizen power, and that we, as adult educators, must do all we can to help people perform more efficiently." (14) Holden's observation clearly suggests the need to broaden the scope of Community Education and harness support from a broad spectrum of expertise. In this regard I am particularly sensitive to the role that adult educators can, and need to play.

One of the most forthright discussions of citizen participation is produced by Edgar and Jean Cahn. They decry the "rituals" and "fallacies" that have been purposefully used to inhibit meaningful citizen participation. In discussing the values of citizen participation, they took note of the humiliating effect of treating adults as children and spelled out the value of citizen participation in mobilizing human resources and "converting the poor from passive consumers of services into producers of services".

Their interpretation of citizen participation is summed up in the following statement:

> Citizen participation does not mean the illusion of participation, the semblance of involvement, the opportunity to speak without being heard, the receipt of token benefits, or the enjoyment of stop-gap pallative measures. Participation means participation -- in every dimension of life, of culture, or of our economy, our educational system, our political system, our decision making processes. It means full enfranchisement with respect to the totality of society's activities. (15)

This view is indeed important for this discussion.

In order to avoid any confusion, it seems expedient to call attention to the distinction between citizen participation, citizen input, citizen involvement and citizen control. Citizen participation is viewed, as the process whereby citizens actually play a role in policy formulation. Citizen control, viewed by many as having 51% or more citizens on a policy making board, citizen input amounts to contributing to policy formulation. Citizen involvement is regarded as a general form of expression, such as voting at election time. (16) The real emphasis in this discussion focuses on citizen participation in policy formation, and leadership roles.

There should be no illusion regarding the problems affecting meaningful citizen participation. Like the hydra-headed monster, whose wounds have not been cauterized, they are many and varied. It needs to be said that those who stand in dire need of productive involvement are not a fully "liberated" people, that the greatest inhibitors to social progress are sometimes drawn from among the very ranks of this group. These, are often referred to as "Uncle Toms" or puppets. This may or may not be true. Sometimes there is conflicting opinion regarding strategies for action, or priority items. Sometimes there is inadequate communication between parties. And it is reasonable to assume that on some occasions, for a variety of reasons, the leaders are not able to fully call to the attention of those in authority the real priority concerns of the masses. Even with the best of intentions on the part of decision makers, they often fail to understand the real problems affecting those who want to enter the mainstream of society.

Ten years of intensive involvement in anti-poverty programs, model cities, remedial programs for minorities in institutions of higher learning have led this reporter to wonder whether or not America is not unconsciously engaged in a "social guerrilla warfare" in dealing with major socioeconomic problems. If and

when this happens not much is accomplished and in the long-run the real losers are those most in need of help. It is clearly obvious that this is a most serious problem affecting meaningful citizen participation. Reflections on personal experiences have perforce compelled me to draw a line of demarcation between the mountain of idealism and the plateau of reality -- relative to productive participation of citizens in a structured social order. And yet the ineluctable questions affecting human growth and development must be addressed. If they are not, what are the alternative outcomes? Could we again witness some of the unfortunate incidents of the 1960's?

Community Education Should Promote Local Leadership

The literature on leadership is quite extensive and the definitions are many. I am inclined to the view that examination and/or interpretation of this concept should take place within the context of the demand of a given set of circumstances. In this respect, the appropriate definition is inherently involved. Since this discussion is primarily aimed at focusing on the need for leadership in community education, extensive review of the literature on leadership per se, seems unnecessary.

Communities and organizations are composed of individuals. Their growth and viability is dependent upon the cooperation and

performance of individuals who play different roles. Within the context of this discussion, there is a preceived need for effective leadership and as Gordon MacKinzie pointed out, this contributes to (a) unity, (b) enrichment of thought, (c) assistance in the development of new skills, (d) promotion of self-confidence and security, (e) help to define the limits of autonomy and interaction, (f) encourages experimental approach and (g) provides opportunities for leadership. These seven points lend support to Lymon Bryson's statement that, "Leadership is not just something that happens," that, "it must be a movement in which the fundamental forces of American life and civilization flow as we wanted them to go", or it may, "be another cult, just another wave on the surface, a self-conscious educational fashion. . ." (17) He further makes the point that the important element in our society now is essential human experience of all ordinary people. Both Bryson and MacKinzie's observations are in a sense, strong endorsements of citizens involvement in decision making. Implicit, also is the realization of the potential for additional learning and enrichment of experiences in the citizens' involvement in community development projects.

There is another school of thought which suggests that leadership for community development should be primarily concerned

with directing diagnostic explorations and with helping learners to find and use the multitude of resources available for meeting their educational needs. It is also suggested that community leaders should be more broadly "educated" so as to be capable of representing neglected disciplines and the interest of the larger community as they work with the residents in the community on the problems and interests of most immediate concern. Conceivably this approach is likely to motivate people to take on active roles.

Browne and Cohn (18) think that, "Much of the literature on leadership represents an attempt to study the leader as an entity possessed of characteristics and traits occupying rather inertly a status position relative to other individuals who are not too closely related to them". But they are of the opinion that, "The leader emerges as a consequence of the need of a group of people and the nature of the situation within which that group is attempting to operate". This is only partially true. Sometimes a qualified leader is carefully chosen in ways not necessarily subtle, and certainly not by "spontaneous emergence".

Haimon says that, "In the broadest sense, leadership refers to that process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences, or controls the thoughts, feelings or behavior of other human

beings". (19) This influence, he thinks, may be extended through the medium of his works, his books, his paintings, his inventions, or through personal face-to-face contact. He underscores his point by observing that:

> If the problem of developing effective leaders was of grave concern to Plato and Plutarch in classical times, how much more so is it today when the complexities of society have increased a millionfold, and when participation in social action has come to include the great masses of men. It is this latter fact which makes leadership in our day a real challenge. As more men become literate and educated, and as social and political participation is extended to an ever-increasing number and variety of such people, leadership must become more widely distributed, more competent, and more democratic. A civilization such as ours cannot survive with weak and unskilled leadership. (20)

The above statement clearly places in perspective the problem of providing meaningful leadership at the community level. More importantly it seems distinctly relevant to urban America

and the specific problems cited.

Leadership fosters decision making, which is the essential responsibility of every leader. It enhances the information dissemination and strengthens organizational structures in the community. Additionally, it has the potential of reducing obstacles and/or resistance to innovations. This may very well be the idealistic viewpoint, but there is no illusion regarding the essential qualities indispensable to good leadership -- patience, understanding, foresight, insight, knowledge of the basic issues, the value of coordination and cooperation.

Almost without exception the literature on leadership emphasizes the democratic approach for community development. It promotes group gynamics and enables society to draw upon all of its human resources. More importantly it is the one approach that is fully understood and accepted by all the people and more importantly it promotes exchange of ideas and compromise.

Summary Observations

At a conference in Wingspread, Racine in mid-April of 1977, Rosemary C. Sarri, Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan, reported that according to her findings from a five year nationwide study (National Assessment of Juvenile

Correction), that teenage unemployment was as high as 60% in some areas. She expressed the view that, "Our inner cities have lost a generation of youth", and the hope that we do not lose two generations. The youth problem is only one segment of the overall problem. There are millions of adults who need training in order to gain employment and relieve taxpayers of the welfare burden. The time is ripe for action and the case for dynamic leadership, citizen participation, coupled with a meaningful partnership between established educational institutions and other community agencies is no longer arguable.

Community development action programs, designed to bring about social change to the "maximum" satisfaction of the members of a particular community must be carefully and purposely planned, taking into consideration both short and long-term objectives.

The extent to which it is expedient to advocate a head count of 51% may be debatable. Any significant energy and time expended on this particular effort could be potentially inhibitive. What is important is meaningful citizen input which (1) will give citizens the feeling that they are contributing to policy formulation as producers and not consumers and (2) that said participation takes the

form of a viable planning relationship between citizens on the one hand and bureaucrats and traditional educational institutions on the other. Involved also is the need for strong leadership from among citizens groups. The challenge is more directed to traditionally established institutions than to those groups who have constantly advocated to be involved in the mainstream of the American society.

Joseph Bannon seemed to underscore this challenge in observing that:

> The urban community colleges and their predecessors, the four-year colleges and universities, must revise their structure to more adequately serve as centers for analyzing local community problems and as catalysts and coordinators of action programs. The new lifestyle for higher education, especially for colleges in inner-city areas, needs to be one of community involvement. (21)

Meaningful citizen participation in which citizens are called upon or are allowed to take part in decisions which affect their lives is one of the cornerstones of the inherent desire to contribute to society and to play a role in attempting to explore the myriad possibilities that this country offers for human growth and development. It

is part of the quest for community and identity. Its accomplishment is one of the vehicles leading to upward mobility and employment stability. As many others have suggested, it could very well be that the dangers and the imperatives of our times require that citizens play a truly meaningful role in decisions affecting their lives. Inherent in this process is the demand that all people become aware of their membership and obligations to the human race. I submit that the task is supreme.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jack D. Minzey and Clyde LeTarte, Community Education From Program to Process (Pendell Publishing Co.), p.4.

2. Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", AIP Journal, (July 1969), p.217.

3. Lee J. Cary, "The Role of the Citizen in the Community Development Process", Community Development As A Process, ed. Lee J. Cary (University of Missouri Press, 1970), p.3-4.

4. Minzey and LeTarte, op. cit., p.6.

5. James J. Shields, Jr., Education in Community Development, AID International Development Agency - with the Development of State.

6. Kenneth J. Little, Does Education For Work, Work? (speech to day school staff at the Madison Area Technical College, 1966).

7. Philip H. Phenix (editor), Philosophies Of Education,(New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1961), p.4.

8. John Dewey, Vocational and Career Education Concepts and Operations, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., Inc., 1976), p. 61.

9. Walter Gerschenfeld, Report on the National Seminar on Basic Adult Education, Centre for Continuing Education, Elliot Lake, Ontario (September 1968), p.11.

10. Melvin Mogulof, "Coalition To Adversary: Citizen Participation In Three Federal Programs", AIP Journal, (July 1969), p.226.

11. Harold C. Edelston and Ferne K. Kolodner, "Are the Poor Capable of Planning for Themselves", Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. Hans B. Spiegel, (1968), p.225-227.

12. Arnstein, op. cit., p.216.

13. Richard L. Cole, Citizen Participation and the Urban Policy Process, (DC Heath & Co., 1974), p.99.

FOOTNOTES (continued)

14. John B. Holden, "A Learning Community", Materials & Methods in Continuing Education, ed. Chester Kelvins (Kelvens Publications Inc., 1976), p.189.

15. Edgar S. Cahn and Jean C. Cahn, "Citizen Participation", Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. Hans B. Spiegel (NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science), p.223.

16. E.J. Moss-Lockhart and D.R. Brown, Citizen Participation and the 'New Federalism', (M.S. Dissertation Thesis UW-Milwaukee, October 1975), p.8.

17. Lymon Bryson, Leaders Digest, Vol. 2, (NEA of the USA, 1955), p.5.

18. C.G. Browne and Thomas S. Cohn, A Study of Leadership, (Interstate Printers & Publishers, IL, 1958), p.3.

19. Franklyn S. Haimon, Group Leadership and Democratic Action, (Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge, MA, 1951), p.4.

20. Ibid, p.5.

21. Joseph J. Bannon, Outreach Extending Community Service in Urban Areas, ed. Charles C. Thomas, p.173.

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